Changing Gears:

Exploring the Experiences of Campus Change Students in the University of Connecticut School of Engineering

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Executive Summary

The undergraduate advising team at the University of Connecticut's School of Engineering received feedback that students who transition from regional campuses to the Storrs campus struggle academically and feel disconnected from their peers and new campus. Consequently, we aimed to examine the efficacy of UConn Engineering's resources designed to specifically assist campus change students and investigate how the transition from one campus to another affected this student population's sense of belonging. Due to limited research on campus change students and regional campuses, we utilized literature on transfer students and branch campuses, in addition to academic advising and sense of belonging, to make up the four themes that informed our approach.

We used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach; first gathering quantitative data through a survey followed by in-depth qualitative interviews. Our survey instrument was disseminated to approximately 435 campus change students that transitioned between Spring 2020 through Spring 2023 and we received a 10% valid response rate. In our quantitative findings, students specifically highlighted their knowledge of and/or experience with the ENGR 3184: School of Engineering Transition Seminar, their motivations to begin their engineering degree at a regional campus, and their perceptions of UConn Engineering's advising services. Through descriptive and inferential analysis, we found that campus change students greatly benefitted from the engineering transition course and that the demographics of UConn Engineering campus change students contradicted the demographics of campus change students stated in the literature review. Upon running chi-square tests, we found the frequency of advising meetings with the quality of advising services and the semester that students transition with feelings of difficulty to be statistically significant. Given the limited sample pool, running

chi-square tests of students' reason to begin at a regional campus by current economic status and race did not produce statistically significant differences.

Our qualitative individual interviews, comprising 29 questions divided into six sections, allowed campus change students to elaborate on their experiences at their regional campus, their transition to the Storrs campus, and their experiences now at Storrs. A recruitment email was sent out to the same 435 students and two students signed up to be interviewed. Through these two interviews, four major themes emerged: discrepancy in academic advising services, differences in classroom experiences between campuses, the transition seminar, and sense of belonging. Due to the limited pool of interviewees, we were unable to determine if these experiences are representative of the campus change student population or if they are individually lived experiences.

Our findings suggest the following implications:

- Bringing back the transition student orientation upon arrival to the Storrs campus from a regional campus
- Better advertisement of the transition seminar course; close to 60% of the respondents stated they did not know the course existed and yet, of those who did take the course, 100% found it helpful and would recommend it
- Increased engagement between Storrs and campus change students before their transition and after

Furthermore, our recommendations for future assessment include:

- Compiling the most beneficial components of the transition seminar and incorporating those findings into a transition student orientation

- Determining the most effective forms of communication with campus change students and disseminating information regarding their transition
- Reviewing the structural model of advising at the School of Engineering, specifically the satisfaction, efficacy, and accountability of professional advisors and faculty members

The School of Engineering at the University of Connecticut encompasses approximately 3,600 undergraduate students across five campuses (J. Steszewski, personal communication, September 15, 2022). Students can begin the pursuit of an engineering degree at any of UConn's regional campuses with the expectation they transition by the end of their second year to the Storrs campus, where they will complete their engineering degree. The undergraduate advising team at the UConn School of Engineering identified that students who transition from regional campuses to the Storrs campus have higher rates of academic probation and struggle to make meaningful connections with their peers (S. Armington & J. Steszewski, personal communication, September 26, 2022). Consequently, the School of Engineering has invested in resources such as a transition seminar course, a specific advising model, more staff, etc., specifically to support campus change students. Despite the investment in new resources, the advising team noted that less than half of the students eligible choose to enroll in the transition seminar course and that campus change students continuously report that they feel like they do not belong at the Storrs campus and within the School of Engineering (S. Armington & J. Steszewski, personal communication, October 21, 2022).

Literature Review

A thorough literature review provided direction for our assessment project and helped inform subsequent research questions, methodologies, and instrumentation. Literature on the role of branch campuses, the experience of transfer students, the type of academic advising offered to transfer students, and measuring sense of belonging in college students were used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the campus change student experience.

Transfer and Campus Change Students

Because the literature on campus change students is sparse, we utilized literature on the transfer student experience to inform our study. Although transfer students are defined as

students who transition from one (sending) university, to another (receiving) university (Townsend, 2008), there is overlap in the experience of campus change students. Thus, as these students are transitioning from a regional campus to the main campus of their institution, we believe that they navigate similar challenges that transfer students typically encounter.

The transition from one higher education institution to another is often a culture shock (Laanan, 2000). Transfer or campus change students, who already have experience at a higher education institution, often face difficulties integrating to their new campus or institution, which is known as transfer shock (Hill, 1965; Ishitani, 2006). This change involves various adjustments to the students' new environment and culture of their new institution (Laanan, 2000). The shock can negatively impact students' grade point average (GPA) within the first year of transferring (Hill, 1965) and difficulty developing their sense of belonging within their new community (Gawley & McGowen, 2006).

Unlike traditional first-year students, transfer and campus change students are familiar with the college experience. However, Townsend (2008) found that transfer students often "feel like freshmen again…"(p. 73) because, despite their prior knowledge of the college experience, they still may have a difficult time adjusting to their new campus (Townsend, 2008). It is the responsibility of the transitioning institutions to identify the unique interests, wants, and needs of these students, and guide them through the new bureaucratic, academic, and social climates (Townsend, 2008).

Previous scholarship notes that transferring can result in continuing negative challenges and consequences for students, which suggests that higher education institutions could be providing better support to this student population (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2016). For example, at The Pennsylvania State University, there is a higher attrition rate for engineering students who

start their undergraduate career at a regional campus then transition to the University Park Campus, despite this being a common path (Howard-Reed et al., 2020). Thus, in order to meet the needs of transfer students, it is necessary for faculty and staff between institutions to communicate and collaborate, be more cognizant of transfer and campus change student concerns, challenges, and needs (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2016), and provide robust opportunities for social and academic engagement (Howard-Reed et al., 2020).

Branch Campuses

Branch campuses originated in Ohio in 1909 as an opportunity to bring education to those who would have otherwise had no access. In 1914, professors and teaching staff began taking trains and streetcars to remote locations, ultimately resulting in access expanding even further beginning in 1924 to the structure of branch campuses we know now (Bird, 2011, p. 66). Since then, branch campuses have grown into their own robust systems, with campuses, communities, and networks far more elaborate than a small handful of professors taking trains into other towns (Bird, 2011).

Though branch campuses vary widely in their characteristics, there are three general features that describe most branch campuses and networks. To begin with, nearly all branch campuses have the primary goal of providing access to education for underrepresented students (Dengerink, 2001). Many of these students are considered "place-bound," meaning that the difficulty of accessing the main campus, may it be due to costs of commuting, higher tuition due to room and board, or other reasons that make relocating impossible, would be insurmountable (Dengerink, 2001). For example, Hoyt and Howell (2012) found that a Salt Lake City branch campus' student composition was composed of 375% more students of a minoritized identity than students of a dominant identity. Second, because branch campuses are often filled with local

students, they are uniquely situated to engage more intentionally (economically and culturally) with the community. In turn, the experience means more than just obtaining a degree.(Dengerink, 2001). Third, branch campuses are centers of academic innovation, meaning they often face unique challenges that require creative solutions – challenges that the main campuses will never interact with due to the composition of their campuses (Dengerink, 2001).

While branch campuses may have cultural and economic impacts on their surrounding communities, constituents at these institutions face many challenges. Jacquemin and Junker (2019) identified that branch campuses are incredibly complex and thus are difficult to research. For example, when analyzing graduation rates, if a student begins on a branch campus but transfers to a main campus at some point during their academic career, it is highly likely that both the main campus and the branch campus will want to claim that student in their graduation records. Are these students being counted twice, overestimating their success, or not at all, having their contributions forgotten? In addition, Krueger (2011) argued that the biggest challenge branch campuses face is being valued, stating that the difficulty in researching branch campuses also holds these campuses back from innovation and progression. This creates an inability to create programming and services that best cater to the needs of the students that they serve (Dengerink, 2001).

As identified by Jacquemin and Junker (2019), branch campuses can be difficult to study due to difficulty of determining how to assign students that transition, but Hoyt and Howell (2012) offer the antithesis to this challenge by arguing that it is most important to understand the motivations of students choosing to enroll at a branch campus. Hoyt and Howell (2012) identified three motivations for why students chose to enroll at branch campuses. First, 21% of students enrolled at a branch campus because they found that they received higher rates and

quality of attention from student support staff and departments. Second, 36% of students chose to enroll at a branch campus because they found that they received more instructor time, ultimately leading to more success. Third, 26% of students thought it would be easier to get a good grade at a branch campus rather than their main campus.

It is important to note that the trends with branch campuses, both good and bad, are heavily dependent on outside perceptions. If stakeholders have a perception of branch campuses that understands the unique demographics of their students and the necessary support structures, the branch campus is more likely to thrive and will be able to better serve their students. Conversely, if stakeholders view branch campuses simply as an extension of the main campus, the unique demographic of students on the branch campuses will not be well served. This lack of support can lead to a lack of enrollment and ultimately, the branch campus' failure to thrive (Bird, 2011).

Academic Advising

Successful academic advising can serve as a strong foundation and support for students (Hawkins, 2017). When it comes to transfer and campus change students, the advisor can sometimes have an even greater impact (Allen et al., 2013). Their roles vary from general student support, like exploring programs of interest, scheduling courses, and identifying career and personal goals (Eduljee & Michaud, 2014), to a more specific set of goals focused on "recognizing, understanding, and addressing their unique needs before and after transferring" (Allen et al., 2013, 331). Instead of program exploration or creating goals with their advisor, transfer and campus change students are more concerned about registering for the correct courses for their degree requirements and understanding the new campus environment (Allen et al., 2013).

Although they have their unique needs, transfer and campus change students still require general advising like students who start at the institution. Eduljee and Michaud (2014) identified five elements of advising that they consider important: 1) setting personal goals, 2) setting career and professional goals, 3) program and major exploration, 4) selection of courses and 5) course registration. Additionally, studies show that students are also more likely to engage with academic advisors who are warm, welcoming, knowledgeable, and prepared (Eduljee & Michaud, 2014; Khali & Williamson, 2014). If students are advised appropriately, they are more likely to have positive satisfaction rates, higher rates of success, and inclined to persist to graduation (Hawkins, 2017).

It is important to remember that academic advising as a process is not perfect and differs between institutions and advising models (Hawkins, 2017). Some models use professional advisors whose role is primarily to advise students throughout their time in university. Other models use faculty advisors who advise in addition to conducting research and teaching courses. While some professional advisors also teach courses, it is less common and they tend to have the ability to focus on comprehensive advising for students (Powers et al., 2014).

The School of Engineering within the University of Connecticut uses a "2 + 2 model for advising" (S.Armington, personal communication, March 30, 2023). During a student's first two years of their undergraduate studies, they work with a professional advisor and during their last two years, they work with a faculty advisor. Per the requirements of the school's ABET accreditation, students are required to meet with their advisor at least once each semester or a hold will be placed on their account and they will not be able to register for courses. Campus change students, once they transition to Storrs, are co-assigned to Shoshana Armington and another advisor, either professional or faculty, for their first semester in Storrs. The advising

requirements for campus change students are the same, and they must also meet with their advisor(s) once per semester.

Sense of Belonging

Students' sense of belonging has been identified as an integral marker for success, engagement, and holistic well-being (Gopalan & Brady, 2019). The concept of sense of belonging stems from Maslow's hierarchy of needs; that belongingness is a basic human motivation and all people share a strong need to belong (Maslow, 1962). In college, sense of belonging "refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (e.g., campus community) or others on campus (e.g., faculty, peers)" (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 3). Strayhorn (2012) stresses that sense of belonging takes on heightened significance in environments that individuals experience as unfamiliar or unwelcoming. Consequently, unsupportive environments can lead to lacking a sense of belonging which, in turn, can negatively impact a student's academic performance and undermine their aspirations to complete their undergraduate degree (Strayhorn, 2012).

Both social and academic connections are essential to demonstrating achievement and persistence outcomes for undergraduate students in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field (Wilson et al., 2015). Because Crisp and Nunez (2014) identified that most transfer students are individuals from low income backgrounds with minoritized racial or ethnic identities, it is pivotal to consider the influence of sense of belonging for low income, as well as ethnically and racially minoritized campus change students in STEM. When compared to other racial and ethnic groups, there is a disparity in the percentage of students who successfully earn a degree and/or campus change. This creates a racial transfer gap, which subsequently

compounds into large gaps in educational attainment among different racial and ethnic groups (Bailey et al., 2005; Gandara et al., 2012).

Because belonging experiences are particularly meaningful, students discuss reasons for changing majors, institutions, or leaving higher education altogether when support is not present (Strayhorn, 2012). Therefore, it is instrumental to consider the integration of multiculturally competent academic and social systems within a university (Tinto, 1993). As racially and ethnically minoritized, low income, campus change students navigate Historically White Institutions (HWIs), it is imperative that establishing a sense of belonging becomes a priority. This could be done through peer networking opportunities, staff advising and mentorship, and inclusive and culturally responsive classroom environments. Because these academic and environmental factors can be fostered, the hope is that these measures aim to eliminate the racial transfer gap, close the gaps in educational attainment among different racial and ethnic groups, and ultimately improve the sense of belonging of racially and ethnically minoritized and low-income students–especially those in STEM (Bailey et al., 2005; Gandara et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Based on the literature review, our team believes that addressing the specific needs of these students is essential to their holistic success. The primary purpose of this assessment is to gather information on the transitional experience of undergraduate School of Engineering campus change students.. Transfer students often experience transfer shock when transitioning (Laanan, 2000), which can impact their academic and social integration, and make it difficult for them to foster a sense of belonging on their new campus (Gawley & McGowen, 2006; Laanan, 2000). These students have special interests and needs that should guide the way staff, faculty, and administration develop resources for them (Howard-Reed et al., 2020; Tobolowsky & Cox,

2016). While there is literature on the importance and robustness of branch campus, the experience of campus change students is missing in the existing literature. The assessment team utilized the current literature to inform our research questions, survey items, and interview questions.

Purpose

UConn Engineering sought out assistance from the Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) program in hopes of better understanding the disconnect between their services and the needs of campus change students. Throughout the assessment project, we worked closely with the advising team responsible for supporting campus change students within UConn's School of Engineering. Our goal was to examine the resources already in place and explore opportunities for improvement through our findings. Our primary intended purpose was to examine the efficacy of UConn Engineering's resources designed to specifically assist campus change students and explore factors that contribute to their transition. Because campus change students feel disconnected from their peers and new campus (S. Armington & J. Steszewski, personal communication, September 26, 2022), our secondary purpose is to investigate how the transition from one campus to another affects this student population's sense of belonging. We used the following questions to guide our assessment:

1. How do campus change students perceive the effectiveness of School of Engineering intervention resources on their academic and social experiences?
2. What are students encountering when changing campuses? How do these experiences affect their transition?
3. What do campus change students consider when seeking to establish a sense of belonging on campus?

Positionality

We acknowledge our positionality and its potential influence on the research process. Our research team is composed of scholars who completed their undergraduate journey in the social sciences field and are currently pursuing a career in education. Consequently, we would like to reflect on our preconceived perceptions of the rigidity of the STEM field that the School of Engineering exists within. It should be noted that Camryn was a campus change student at her undergraduate institution–her first-hand knowledge of what the campus change experience can be like influences her interest and connection to this assessment. We would also like to highlight that Ulises is a first generation, brown Latino male and thus, has a particular interest in the systemic inequities that exist within STEM and the impact it has on racially minoritized students–especially other Latine students. The research team holds positions of power within the University of Connecticut community through their respective graduate assistantships. Although this might not affect the pool of students that complete our survey, it could influence the respondents we would like to interview and hear more from. Although we are not representatives of UConn Engineering, students may view the research team as an extension of the advising team and cater their responses to be more palatable.

Design

We used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, which allowed the data collection and analysis from our quantitative research to influence our qualitative data collection and analysis (Biddix, 2018, p.272). Gathering quantitative data through a survey first was important to our process. The interviews served as an expansion and explanation of the survey data because we asked questions that allowed us to dive deeper into the information asked on the survey. In this sequential explanatory approach, we collected data from 46 survey respondents

with 35 valid respondents within the specific campus-change population. We then conducted interviews with two students from the same campus-change population. Using both data forms allowed us to investigate the broader feelings of students through the survey, as well as explore the more specific experiences of students in greater detail through the interviews.

Instruments

As a mixed methods assessment project, we used quantitative and qualitative instruments to collect data (Biddix, 2018). The main instruments we used were: a quantitative web-based survey with embedded qualitative questions and qualitative individual interviews.

Quantitative Instruments

When designing our survey instrument, we aimed to gather information on students' experiences with their campus change process. The questions on the survey asked students to reflect on their experiences with and the frequency of their interactions with the advising services offered by UConn's School of Engineering, self-reporting of their academic performance, social and academic adjustment pre- and post-campus change, and other questions that allowed us to get a better understanding of their holistic experiences with this process. Our goal with the survey was to attempt to identify areas of potential growth for the support systems offered by the School of Engineering.

The team used UConn Qualtrics to create the survey instrument, which was then sent out on our behalf to our identified population by Shoshana Armington, the Associate Director of Advising for Student Transitions within UConn's School of Engineering during March, 2023. The survey was used to identify demographics, academic background, sense of belonging, and levels of satisfaction with, and effectiveness of, support services. The survey also served as a start to explore the experiences of campus change students at their regional campus, at the Storrs

campus, and during their transition between the two. These questions were designed to allow us to conduct inferential statistics tests that looked at difference between variables such as how often students met with advisors and their levels of satisfaction with advising. When developing our survey, we ensured that our participants would not have question fatigue and aimed to reduce the drop-out attrition rates of our survey participants by reducing the number of open-ended response questions, which were in turn, asked during interviews instead. The survey can be found in Appendix A.

Qualitative Instruments

During the individual interviews, we asked questions that allowed us to gather information on students' sense of belonging since changing campuses, how (if at all) they utilized both campus and the School of Engineering's resources, what has affected students' transitions, and more. Overall, we aimed to learn about the social and academic experiences of campus change students.

Through interviews, we expanded upon the information we gathered from the surveys and learned more about the experiences of campus change students. An email to sign up for an interview was sent out on our behalf to our identified population by Shoshana Armington. We conducted two interviews. Upon consent from the interviewee, the interview was recorded and then transcribed. Each interview lasted about an hour and was conducted in conjunction by two of the team members via WebEx. Both team members took turns asking the interviewee questions and worked together to take notes during the interview.

Our first interviewee, Thomas, is a returning student in his third year. When returning to higher education, he was admitted into the program he applied for at the Avery Point campus. Our second interviewee, Emily, is in her final semester at UConn. She transitioned to the Storrs

campus at the beginning of her third year, after being admitted into the program she applied for at the Avery Point campus.

The interview protocol consisted of questions that would not have been suitable for a survey. These types of questions include: How did you feel about starting your undergraduate engineering experience at a regional campus?; How would you describe the relationships you had with your professors at your regional campus?; and Can you describe how you feel about your involvement at the Storrs campus? The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Data Collection Timeline and Advertising Strategy

Our target population was campus change students in the School of Engineering at the University of Connecticut. These students began their academic careers at a regional campus and have since transitioned to the Storrs campus. We used UConn Qualtrics for survey collection and WebEx with a password for virtual interviews. All data was stored on OneDrive.

In December 2022, we submitted the UConn Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. After our application was approved in January, we moved into our data collection process. On February 23, 2023, the Assistant Director of Advising for Student Transitions, Shoshan Armington, disseminated the survey to 435 campus change students on our behalf. This happened through a listserv with one anonymous link. The survey remained open for three weeks. An initial reminder email was sent after one week and a final reminder email was sent after the second week, resulting in a total of three emails regarding the survey.

On March 2, 2023, Shoshana Armington sent an email to the same 435 campus change students about signing up for individual interviews. This email included a WeJoinIn link that had time slots for interview participants to submit their information into. A reminder email about

signing up for an interview was sent out the following week. Our interviews were conducted on March 23, 2023 and March 30, 2023. Each interview had two team members present.

Data Analysis and Cleaning

Data Cleaning

Before we could begin analyzing the data collected, we had to complete a significant amount of cleaning and recoding of the data. First, we started by removing any respondents that dropped out within the first three questions ("Informed Consent," "Are you a UConn Engineering Student?," and "Are you a campus change student?"). This first round of cleaning removed any respondents that did not fit our sample demographic, and thus were not eligible to participate in the survey. A total of six respondents dropped out of the survey during this portion of the survey.

Next, we removed five additional respondents who dropped out of the survey within the first eight questions. This determination was made because there were no other respondents who dropped out after we removed the initial six respondents. Furthermore, the benefits of having data for those first few questions did not outweigh the challenges that the missing responses from the five respondents would have created in cleaning the data for statistical significance. Our initial total number of respondents was 46. After clearing the data, our total number of valid respondents was 35.

As we began conducting inferential data analysis, it was clear that all variables needed to be coded down as much as possible in order to attempt to calculate statistically significant results. Due to our small response rate, it was not possible to calculate statistical significance without recoding the variables.

All questions that asked respondents to what level they agreed with a statement were recoded from “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” to be “Disagree,” and the responses of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” were coded into “Agree.” Similarly, questions that asked respondents their level of satisfaction were recoded from “Extremely Dissatisfied” and “Dissatisfied” to “Dissatisfied,” and “Extremely Satisfied” and “ Satisfied” were recoded into “Satisfied”. Economic status was recoded into “Lower-Lower Middle Class” and “Middle-Upper Middle Class” as there were no respondents who identified above Upper Middle Class. The variable “TransitioSem,” which indicated the semester respondents transitioned from their regional campus to the Storrs campus, was recoded to be grouped by year into the variable “RCTransitionSem” where 1= 2nd semester, 2= 3rd and 4th semester, and 3= 5th and 6th semesters. The group determination was made on the basis of categorizing the semesters by academic year (first-year/freshman, second-year/sophomore, and third-year/junior).

All variables that were selected and all that apply variables were condensed into one variable. For example, the question that asked students why they chose not to enroll in the transition course created four separate variables: one variable for each possible response. This was recoded into one variable, “NoClass” with the values of 1=Class was full, 2= Was not interested, 3= Did not know the class existed, and 4= some other reason.

Furthermore, the demographics questions, Race, Hispanic Identity, and Gender were select all that apply options and also needed to be recoded further than creating only one variable. Race was recoded, combining all race-based variables to be 1= Asian, 2= White, and 3= Some other Minoritized Identity. The full race demographics can be found in Table 3. Hispanic Identity was recoded into 1= Not Hispanic and 2= Hispanic, and the full demographics are listed in Table 4. Lastly, the variable “Male” was recoded into “Gender” where 0=Female and 1=Male.

All but one respondent that selected more than one gender marker selected either “male” or “female” in addition to “cis-gender”. The one respondent that did not select “cis-gender” as their additional marker selected “two-spirit.” Ultimately, the research team categorized this individual as “male” because a sole response as “two-spirit” would not allow for relational data analysis. This can be found in more detail in Table 5. The research team acknowledges the importance of recognizing students' identity markers and the significance that they carry. The decision to recode these identity markers was made in an attempt to determine statistical significance between various variables.

Quantitative Data Analysis

After the survey closed on March 13th, two teams members worked in conjunction to analyze the data collected in our quantitative survey using both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques (Biddix, 2018, p.178-199). Descriptive analysis was used to look at the frequency of values such as academic performance rates, percentage of students enrolled in the seminar course, how many students are transferring into specific major programs, and the number of students transitioning to Storrs from each regional campus. Using descriptive analysis gave us an understanding of how many students were involved in experiences of campus change students and allowed us to find the themes that developed throughout that informed our approach through the remainder of the research. Inferential data analysis was used to identify if there were any differences between variables, guided by questions such as: is there a difference in successful student transitions dependent based on the regional campus they change to Storrs from or does enrolling in the seminar course impact the academic success rate of the student?

Qualitative Data Analysis

Analyzing the qualitative interviews required additional data analysis techniques. We selected an inductive and reductionist approach that will allow the data to guide our findings, which also keeps the analysis focused and simplified for easier understanding (Biddix, 2018, p. 28-29, 163). Using these strategies, two team members condensed and simplified the qualitative data by using a coding system. The codebook we created prior to conducting interviews was used for analysis, as well as grouping similar responses, identifying patterns between interviews, and creating clear links between the data and summaries. Examples of this included asking ourselves questions such as: How do students describe their transitions to the Storrs campus from the regional campuses? Are there common experiences between students who transition from the same regional campus? What elements are students describing that may have assisted or complicated their transition to the Storrs campus?

Design Limitations

We were not able to send the survey or interview to students who have already graduated from the program or students who have left the program due to changing majors, dropping out willingly, or being expelled from the program due to academic performance. One of the data points that was considered is the experiences of campus change students that have been on academic probation. Our research is limited in this variable due to lost contact with the students who have left the program because of academic failure, a key demographic that we aimed to assess. Students who are struggling academically may also be less likely to respond to general emails, which would impact their participation in the survey and following interview phase.

Additionally, the sample we worked with is limited to current students who have transitioned campuses from a regional UConn campus to the Storrs campus from Spring of 2020 through Spring of 2023. The sample pool was a total of 435 students. The survey received 46

respondents which is approximately a 10% response rate. Students may have chosen to not participate in the survey for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to: not checking their email, no interest in completing the survey, or not having appropriate access to email or internet to complete the survey. While our response rate was what we had anticipated, there were only 35 valid responses. This posed a significant challenge in conducting data analysis. Many of the conducted tests could not determine statistical significance due to responses not meeting the necessary expected number of responses. An additional limitation was low participation in interviews. With only two total interviews, it is hard to say with certainty if issues were trends or simply individually lived experiences. Participation in the interview phase of our research may have been limited to students who have the time to complete an interview, students willing to answer questions about their experience, and students with access to the internet that can support virtual meetings.

Lastly, because we were conducting inferential statistical analysis, we were unable to draw conclusions regarding the directionality of results. While we were able to find statistically significant differences between variables, we cannot say whether or not something is more or less likely to impact another variable.

Findings

By running descriptive statistic frequencies, we determined that the majority of respondents did not know that the engineering transition course existed. 82.9% of respondents answered “no,” that they did not take the course. When asked why they did not take the course, 3.0% selected that it was full, 24.1% selected that they were not interested, 58.6% selected that they did not know the course existed, and 13.7% selected that there were other reasons for not taking the course. The research team hypothesized that there may be a difference between why

respondents choose to not take the transition course and the regional campus that they were transitioning from. To test this, we used a Chi-Square test between the two variables, but did not find a statistically significant relationship with a p-value of 0.670 . However, it should be noted that across all four regional campuses, not knowing that the class existed was the most selected option, followed by not being interested at the Stamford and Waterbury campuses. It should also be noticed that of the 17.1% of respondents that took the transition seminar, 100% of those respondents both found the course helpful in their academic transition *and* would recommend the course to other campus change students.

First we ran descriptive statistic frequencies to determine the motivations for starting at a regional campus. 23.3% respondents cited financial reasons. 6.6% of respondents cited academic reasons. 56.6% students stated that they started at a regional campus due to their admission offer, and 20.0% respondents opted for a reason not listed. We then ran a Chi-Square test between race and reason for starting at a regional campus. There was not a statistically significant relationship between the two variables with a p-value of 0.491. Next, we ran a Chi-Square test between economic status and reason for starting at a regional campus and once again there was not a statistically significant relationship as the p-value was 0.381. It should be noted that through descriptive statistic frequencies, we determined that 28.6% respondents identified at lower-lower middle class and 57.1% respondents identified as middle- upper middle class. This economic breakdown is a contradiction of regional campus literature that indicates regional campuses are primarily composed of lower-lower middle class students. However, we cannot say weather this is a trend within the School of Engineering or specific to our sample size and may be an interesting area for future assessment.

We then ran frequencies for the question that asked “I am satisfied with the quality of advising at Storrs.” 37.1% of respondents reported that they disagreed with the statement and 60.0% of respondents reported that they agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of advising at Storrs. We also ran frequencies to determine how often respondents met with their academic advisors. 14.3% of respondents never meet with their advisor during a typical semester. 65.7 % of respondents meet with their advisor 1-2 times during a typical academic semester, and 20.0% of respondents meet with their advisor 3-4 times. With this information, we developed the hypothesis that there would be a relationship between feeling satisfied with the quality of advising at Storrs and the number of times that respondents met with their advisor in a typical semester. To test this, we ran a Chi-Square test between the two variables. The Chi-Square test produced a P-Value of 0.008, meaning that there is a statistically significant difference between the two variables.

We then looked at respondents views on if they had a difficult academic transition. 54.3% of respondents disagreed that they have had a difficult time academically since transitioning campuses and 34.3% respondents indicated that they have had a difficult time academically since transitioning. The research team had various hypotheses about variables that may have a relationship with responses to feeling as though respondents have had a difficult time academically since changing campuses. However, there was only one Chi-Square test cross tabulation that was statistically significant. The semester respondents transitioned to Storrs and feeling as though respondents have had a difficult time academically since transitioning had a statistically significant difference with a Chi-Square test P-Value of .006.

Qualitative Results and Findings

Using field notes and the codebook, then grouping similar responses, we found four major themes: inconsistencies with academic advising, classroom experiences, engineering transition seminar, and fostering a sense of belonging before, during, and after their campus change.

First, there are inconsistencies with the advising that campus change students receive. The School of Engineering advising structure for campus change students currently operates under a 2+2 model, meaning a student is paired with a professional advisor during their first two years at their regional campus and then later paired with Shoshana Armington once they campus change in addition to either another professional advisor or a faculty member. As a result, some students have the added benefit of receiving support from an expert in their major. Emily, for example, is in one of the smaller majors within engineering and it has allowed for more intimate and worthwhile engagement with her faculty advisor in her field. “My academic advisor I’ve had in multiple classes; she is also the advisor to one of the clubs I’m in… I’m [also] doing research with her–so I have a really good relationship with her.” This is very specific to Emily’s experience because the same cannot be said for Thomas; he yearns for that transformational mentorship. When asked what changes he could make to UConn’s advising team if he had a magic wand, he said “I would add more advisors, 100%... and for students to be paired with someone who has graduated from their field.” His input and our quantitative findings support the need and benefit of having more advisors, specifically advisors within their discipline. The School of Engineering’s Advising Team currently has nine professional advisors and they are seeking to hire a tenth but it would be important to ensure advisors are representative of their students’ academic and professional interests.

Second, in terms of classroom experience, both students expressed positive experiences with their smaller classroom environments at their regional campuses. Emily shared that she "[felt] more comfortable asking questions when [she did not] understand something" in smaller classrooms and Thomas added that professors were more available to readily "sit down and talk through [questions] and figure out what's wrong to help [him] get back on track." Both students stated that these environments allowed for more intimate learning and for more personal relationships with faculty which resulted in greater mentorship and more accessible advising. Thus, both students gained a better understanding of not only their coursework, but also what they needed to complete in order to campus change.

Third, when asked about the transition seminar that the School of Engineering offers, neither student took it. Thomas said, "I'm going to be honest, I didn't even know that existed." Emily mentioned that the course was either not offered during her first semester at Storrs due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as her first semester on the campus was Fall 2020, or it did not fit into her schedule that first semester.

Fourth, both interviewees spoke about fostering a sense of belonging within their community of peers when they transitioned to Storrs. Emily stated that "most of the people I'm friends with now are still some of my friends from Avery Point, in my major, in either of the clubs I've done, … or they're minoring or just interested in MSE [material sciences and engineering] in general." Additionally, she noted that having a group of friends with similar experiences was beneficial because she "had a very unique college experience compared to most people in my major or even most of my friends that came from Avery Point" due to her major being smaller than most other engineering programs. Thomas mentioned that he keeps in touch with the other students he campus changed with, stating "You find time to meet up with the

people you campus changed with and see how their classes are going…you tend to keep in touch with the people that were at the same campus as you, especially if you're in the same major." He noted that he was the only person in his major to transition to Storrs in the year he did, so he did not know anyone in his courses, but despite this, feels comfortable in his courses and found it "easy to talk to non-campus change students." Thus, both students had a fairly easy time making and/or keeping friends when they changed campuses due to various factors. Most of the friends they have made or kept during their transition are those who they see often, either in classes or in other campus contexts.

In addition, Thomas and Emily had varying experiences when it came to sense of belonging and value. Thomas noted that he has spoken with some professors who "didn't seem to care whether I learned the material or not," but that he "feel[s] valued as a member of the classroom" by his peers. Emily noted that the institution at large does not care about her as an individual, since they will get her money either way. But, she said that she does feel valued within her major due to its small size. She knows the faculty and often serves as a spokesperson for the program – "I see my experiences are valued to people trying to go further. I'll talk about [my major] and the fun things that it has; it's become a passion of mine over the last few years." Thomas stated that he felt like he earned his place here through proving his capability, and so, felt like he belonged on campus. Emily stated that she felt like she belonged on campus because "UConn always felt right to me from the beginning" and she has "some sort of community from UConn." Thus, while sometimes faculty and the institution as a whole have made students feel undervalued, their peers and the other small communities they have fostered do make them feel belonging and value on the Storrs campus.

Recommendations and Implications

In the two interviews that were conducted, the interviewees both indicated that it may have been helpful in their transition to have gone through some type of orientation upon their arrival to Storrs. The research team recommends this and furthermore, we recommend that either some, or all, of the orientation groups participants based on the year in which they are transitioning. The results indicated that there is a difference between when students transition and feeling as though they had a difficult academic transition. In this orientation, transition students could become more familiar with campus, meet other campus change students, including those in their year, and find out important information that might have gotten lost in the shuffle of their transition.

Every respondent who indicated that they had taken the engineering transition course also indicated that the course was helpful with their transition to the Storrs campus and that they would recommend the course to other campus change students. Twenty-nine of our total sample of thirty-six respondents had not taken the course. Of the twenty-nine that had not taken the course, seventeen of them selected that they did not know the course existed. This data indicates that there is room for improvement with regard to communication about the transition course. If all respondents that said that they took the course are finding the course to be helpful, but roughly half of all our respondents did not know that the course existed, there appears to be a lack of communication. Qualitative data collected from the interviews backs up the findings from the survey, as one of the two interviewees was unaware the course was offered. He also mentioned that there was so much information coming to him during the transition, which suggests that information about the course may have gotten lost. The team suggests increasing advertising of the course in the meetings students are required to attend prior to changing

campuses, advisers communicating with students that the course is available as an option when they register for courses on the Storrs campus, and advertising the course in a variety of ways instead of just through email such as social media engagement or text messages.

Our final recommendation is to increase the amount of engagement between current Storrs students and regional campus students. Emily indicated in her survey that she wished she had known students that were already on the Storrs campus. Additionally, she indicated that within her club, she is currently working to create more connections between Storrs and regional campus students to fill the lack of support that she had in her transition. We believe that the advising department, in conjuction with other Engineering departments, should make a concerted effort to create opportunities for students to connect across campuses with the hope of making Engineering feel more like one department rather than fractured communities.

Recommendations for Future Assessment

Because all of the respondents who took the transition seminar indicated that they found the course helpful and would recommend it to other students, we recommend conducting an assessment of all students that have taken the course with the purpose of identifying key takeaways that students found helpful. The research team thinks that these findings could then be integrated into the above orientation that we recommend. We were informed that the transition seminar has had incredibly low registration rates and may not be offered in the near future (S. Armington personal communication, April 11, 2023). Considering that the class may no longer be offered, we think it is paramount to know what students found helpful and highlight those aspects during orientation.

An additional area for future assessment would be to conduct an assessment of the entire Engineering student body on what forms of communication are most engaged with. The majority of respondents and both interview participants indicated that they did not know that the transition seminar existed. However, Advising indicated that they send numerous emails regarding the course. This leads the research team to hypothesize that students are not reading their emails and it may be beneficial to have a better understanding of how students prefer communication from University departments.

We found a statistically significant difference between the frequency that students met with their advisor and their satisfaction with the quality of advising. The School of Engineering requires all students to meet with their advisor at least once per semester, and places a registration hold on students' accounts if they fail to meet this requirement. Despite this requirement, there were still seven respondents who indicated that they never met with their advisor in a typical semester. Given this information, we recommend conducting a two-fold assessment. To begin with, conducting an assessment including the entire Engineering student body on their frequencies of meeting with and overall views of advising may be beneficial to help determine if our research is indicative of a greater trend or specific to our sample. Lastly, we think it would be beneficial to conduct an assessment of advisors to gauge their levels of satisfaction with the advising model.

Institutional Review Board Application

IRB Section 3: Other Required Elements

A) Risks and Inconveniences:

a) There are no foreseeable risks to participants, above those that they may experience in their daily life. It is possible that some participants may have encountered difficult or distressing experiences during their campus-change, and participating in the study may cause them to reflect on these experiences. Participants have the right to stop the study at any time should they no longer wish to continue. They will be inconvenienced by giving up approximately 20 minutes of their time to complete the survey and/or approximately 1 hour of their time to be interviewed.

Another risk of note is a breach of confidentiality in the event the data set was compromised. To minimize this risk, the data will be stored on a secure OneDrive hosted by the University of Connecticut.

B) Benefits

a) Participants may not see direct benefits from our research. However, the findings of our research have the potential to create improved student support services and greater investment in campus-change academic and social success.

C) Compensation

a) Participants will have the option to enter a raffle for one of two University of Connecticut School of Engineer "Swag Packs." Upon completing the survey questionnaire, the Qualtrics end of survey message includes a link to a new

Qualtrics form where participants can provide their name and UConn email addresses to be entered in the raffle. Raffle entries will be completely separate from their anonymous survey responses. Interview participants will be emailed the link to the survey that collects names and UConn email addresses to be entered into the raffle should the participant choose to do so.

D) Privacy/ Confidentiality

a) While confidentiality will be maintained, it is not possible to conduct this research anonymously due to the nature of the interviews. As such, the research team has completed the required Data Security Assessment Form.

E) Data Collection

a) We will collect participants' responses using UConn Qualtrics. The PIs and key personnel will have access to the data. It should be noted that due to the nature of the survey, such as the collection of demographic information and the small sample pool, we cannot guarantee anonymity. However, the research team views confidentiality with the utmost importance and will take all necessary precautions to ensure the data is safely stored.

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Tables

Table 1

Crosstabulation comparing the semester students transitioned to Storrs and reporting a difficult academic transition since changing campuses

	Reported a Difficult Academic Transition Since Changing Campuses		
Semester Students Transitioned to Storrs	% Agree (N)	% Disagree (N)	Total (N)
2nd Semester	0.0(0)	31.6(6)	19.4(6)
3rd to 4th Semester	83.3(10)	26.3(5)	48.4(15)
5th to 6th Semester	16.7(2)	42.1(8)	32.3(10)
Total (N)	38.7(12)	61.3(19)	100.0(31)

p = 0.006

Table 2

Crosstabulation comparing the frequency of academic advising meetings on the Storrs campus and agreement with the statement, "I am satisfied with the quality of advising at Storrs"

Frequency of Academic Advising Meeting	% Agree (N)	% Disagree (N)	Total (N)
Never	4.8(1)	46.2(6)	20.6(7)
1-2 times	76.2(16)	53.8(7)	67.6(23)
3-4 times	19.0(4)	0.0(0)	11.8(4)
Total (N)	61.8(21)	38.2(13)	100.0(34)

p = 0.008

Table 3

Race Demographics

Selected Race	% of Cases (N)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0(0)
Asian	23.3(7)
Black or African American	10.0(3)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	6.7(2)
White	60.0(18)
Some Other Race	3.3(1)
Prefer to Self-Describe	6.7(2)
Prefer Not to Say	3.3(1)
Total	113.3(34)

Table 4

Hispanic Identity Demographics

Selected Hispanic Identity	% of Cases (N)
Not Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish Origin	86.7(26)
Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicano/a/x	0.0(0)
Another Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish Origin	6.7(2)
Puerto Rican	0.0(0)
Cuban	0.0(0)
Some Other Race/Ethnicity/Origin	3.3(1)
Prefer to Self-Describe	3.3(1)
Prefer Not to Say	3.3(1)
Total	103.3(31)

Table 5

Gender Demographics

Selected Gender	% of Cases (N)
Agender	0(0)
Cisgender	9.7(3)
Female	32.3(10)
Genderqueer	0(0)
Male	67.7(21)
Nonbinary	0(0)
Transgender	0(0)
Two-Spirit	3.2(1)
Gender Not Listed	0(0)
Prefer to Self-Describe	0(0)
Prefer Not to Say	0(0)
Total	112.9(35)

Appendix A

As a student who has transitioned from a UConn regional campus to the Storrs campus, your experience is integral to our understanding of the School of Engineering's change of campus student experience. This survey is voluntary and you do not have to answer all of the questions. We will be using this survey to aid in our assessment of the School of Engineering's transition student advising and programming.

The information in this survey will be confidential and it should take you between 10-15 minutes to complete. Please contact soeassessment@gmail.com with any questions or concerns. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

1. Are you a student within the UConn School of Engineering? (required)
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

If no: thank you for your interest in participating in this research. No further information is needed from you at this time.

2. Are you a student who changed campuses from a regional campus to the Storrs Campus? (required)
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

If no: thank you for your interest in participating in this research. No further information is needed from you at this time.
If yes: proceed to the full survey.

The following section asks you about your regional campus:

3. During a typical semester at your **regional** campus, how often did you meet with your academic advisor?
   - ☐ Never
   - ☐ 1-2 times
   - ☐ 3-4 times
   - ☐ 5 or more times

4. How would you rate your level of effectiveness with academic advising at your **regional** campus?
   - ☐ Extremely Unsatisfied
   - ☐ Unsatisfied
   - ☐ Satisfied
   - ☐ Extremely Satisfied

The following section asks you about the <u>Storrs Campus</u>

5. During a typical semester at the **<u>Storrs</u>** campus, how often do you meet with your academic advisor in the School of Engineering?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1-2 times
- ☐ 3-4 times
- ☐ 5 or more times

6. How would you rate your level of effectiveness with academic advising in the School of Engineering at **<u>Storrs</u>**?

- ☐ Extremely Unsatisfied
- ☐ Unsatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Extremely Satisfied

7. Have you ever been enrolled or are you currently enrolled in the First Year Transition/Transfer Student course offered by the School of Engineering's academic advising?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If No:

8. Why did you not take the course? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Class was full
- ☐ Was not interested
- ☐ Did not know it was an option
- ☐ Other: _____

If yes:

9. How helpful was the course in your academic transition to the Storrs campus?

- ☐ Extremely Unhelpful
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Extremely Helpful

10. How would you rate the course for helpfulness in your social transition to the Storrs campus?

- ☐ Extremely Unhelpful
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Extremely Helpful

11. How helpful was the course in meeting new people?
- ☐ Extremely Unhelpful
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Extremely Helpful

12. How helpful was the course in understanding new campus policies?
- ☐ Extremely Unhelpful
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Extremely Helpful

13. How helpful was the course in getting you acquainted with other resources/faculty on campus?
- ☐ Extremely Unhelpful
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Extremely Helpful

14. Would you recommend the course to other change of campus students?
- ☐ Extremely Unhelpful
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Extremely Helpful

The following questions will ask if you agree or disagree with certain statements regarding your transition to Storrs.

Academic

15. Upon my arrival in Storrs, I felt that I needed to "catch up" academically to my peers that began their degree at the **Storrs** campus.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

16. I knew what courses I needed to take at the **Storrs** campus.
- ☐ Strongly disagree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

17. I am well adjusted academically at the **Storrs** campus.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

18. I am receiving more academic support at Storrs than at my **regional** campus.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

19I . I knew what courses I needed to take at my **regional** campus.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

20. I have had a difficult time academically since changing campuses.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

Social

21. I am more socially isolated than my peers that began their degree at Storrs.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

22. I was able to form strong connections with my peers at my **regional** campus.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

23. I have been able to form strong connections with my peers at **Storrs**.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

24. Upon my arrival in Storrs, I felt that I needed to "catch up" socially to my peers that began their degree at the **Storrs** campus.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

25. I feel a sense of belonging with my peers at the **Storrs** campus.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

26. I have had a difficult time socially since transitioning campuses.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

27. Being a campus change student makes me feel like a freshman again.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

28. I am well adjusted socially at **Storrs**.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Advising/Faculty

29. The School of Engineering academic advising at **Storrs** has provided me with tools for success.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

30. I am satisfied with the quality of advising I received at my **regional campus**.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

31. I am satisfied with the quality of support I received at my **regional campus**.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

32. There is nothing else the School of Engineering could have done to make the campus transition better.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

33. I have been able to form strong connections with my faculty at **Storrs**.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

34. Tools provided by the School of Engineering have helped me in my transition from my regional campus to the **Storrs** campus.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

35. I feel a sense of belonging with the School of Engineering faculty at the **Storrs** campus.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

36. I am satisfied with the quality of advising I am receiving at **Storrs**.
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

37. I was able to form strong connections with my faculty at my **regional campus**.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

34. I am satisfied with the quality of support I am receiving at **Storrs**.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

35. My campus transition could have gone smoother if I had more resources.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

36. My campus transition could have gone smoother if I had more information.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

37. Did you or do you have a peer mentor?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

If yes: Answer the following question.
If no: Move onto the next section.

38. Having a peer mentor is helpful in my campus change.
    - ☐ Strongly disagree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Strongly agree

Campus and academic life.

39. In a typical week at **Storrs**, how often are you in the Student Union?
    - ☐ Almost daily
    - ☐ Once a week
    - ☐ 2-3 times a week
    - ☐ Never

40. In a typical week at **Storrs**, how often are you in the library?
- ☐ Almost daily
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Never

41. In a typical week at **Storrs**, how often are you in the engineering building?
- ☐ Almost daily
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Never

42. In a typical week at your **regional campus**, how often were you in the student union building?
- ☐ Almost daily
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Never

43. In a typical week at your **regional campus**, how often were you in the library?
- ☐ Almost daily
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Never

44. In a typical week at your **regional campus**, how often were you in the Engineering building, if there was one.
- ☐ Almost daily
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Never

45. Do you find the courses at **Storrs** more challenging than the course at your regional campus?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Open-ended response questions

46. What was your biggest concern when you changed campuses?

47. What has been the easiest about your campus change?

48. What has been the most difficult part of your campus change?

49. Are there any tools or services that have been provided by academic advising within the School of Engineering you have found to be particularly useful for your academic or social success?

Lastly, we would like to collect some information regarding your demographics. We are looking for trends between campuses, so it is important for us to be able to identify where respondents transitioned from and when.

50. What is your academic year?
- ☐ First year
- ☐ Second year
- ☐ Third year
- ☐ Fourth year
- ☐ Other: _____

51. What regional campus did you transfer from? [Drop down]
- ☐ Stamford
- ☐ Waterbury
- ☐ Hartford
- ☐ Avery Point

52. What discipline of engineering are you pursuing? Check all that apply. [Drop down]
- ☐ Biomedical engineering
- ☐ Chemical & biomolecular engineering
- ☐ Civil engineering
- ☐ Computer engineering
- ☐ Computer science
- ☐ Computer science & engineering
- ☐ Electrical engineering
- ☐ Multidisciplinary engineering
- ☐ Environmental engineering
- ☐ Materials science & engineering
- ☐ Mechanical engineering
- ☐ Robotics engineering
- ☐ Engineering physics

53. When did you transition to Storrs?
- ☐ 3rd semester
- ☐ 4th semester
- ☐ Other: _____

54. I began my undergraduate career at a regional campus due to:
- ☐ Financial reasons
- ☐ Academic reasons
- ☐ Acceptance Offer
- ☐ Reason not listed (please explain)

55. How many credits would you average in a typical semester at your **regional** campus?
- ☐ 12-15 credits
- ☐ More than 15 credits
- ☐ Less than 12 credits

56. How many credits are you averaging in a typical semester at the **Storrs** campus?
- ☐ 12-15 credits
- ☐ More than 15 credits
- ☐ Less than 12 credits

57. Are you currently (or have you ever) been part of a living learning community? If so, which one?
- ☐ Yes: _____
- ☐ No

58. Were you at any point on academic probation at your regional campus?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

59. Have you ever been on academic probation since changing to the Storrs campus?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

60. What is your racial identity? Check all that apply.
- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Some other race
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe
    - ☐ _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

61. Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or of Spanish origin? Check all that apply
- ☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a/x

- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, Another Hispanic, Latino/a/x or Spanish origin
- ☐ Some other race, ethnicity, or origin
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe
  - ☐ _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

62. What is your gender identity? Check all that apply.
- ☐ Agender
- ☐ Cisgender
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Genderqueer
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary/third gender
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ A gender not listed
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe
  - ☐ _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

63. Are you a first-generation student?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

64. How would you define your economic status growing up?
- ☐ Lower class
- ☐ Lower middle class
- ☐ Middle class
- ☐ Upper middle class
- ☐ Upper class
- ☐ Status not described here
  - ☐ _____

65. How would you consider your current economic status?
- ☐ Lower class
- ☐ Lower middle class
- ☐ Middle class
- ☐ Upper middle class
- ☐ Upper class
- ☐ Status not described here
  - ☐ _____

66. Do you currently have a job to support paying for school?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes:

67. Is your position work study?

68. Where is your job located?

If no: continue to next question

69. Are you interested in participating in an individual interview about your experiences as a campus change student in UConn's School of Engineering? If you select "yes" you will be directed to a separate form on the next page that will allow you to share your contact information.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! We appreciate your thoughtful and honest answers. We truly value the information you provided us and it will be helpful as we conduct our assessment. Please click the link below to provide your contact information. This will allow your answers to remain separate from your participation in the interview process.

If no:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! We appreciate your thoughtful and honest answers. We truly value the information you provided us and it will be helpful as we conduct our assessment.

Appendix B

Thank you for volunteering to be interviewed by our team today. As we stated in the informed consent, our team would like to record these interviews to ensure data is complete and accurate. Do you still consent to being recorded? Okay, great. Thank you for your consent!

To provide some background into our project, we have been asked by the School of Engineering's advising team to conduct an assessment on the experience of campus change students. UConn Engineering has invested in programming and resources aimed to support campus change students with their transition from their regional campus to Storrs. Through these interviews, we aim to learn about your and other campus change students' experiences so the UConn Engineering advising team can best support campus change students.

In this interview, we will be asking you questions regarding your experience as an engineering student at your regional campus, during your transition, and at the Storrs campus. We anticipate this interview will last about an hour. If we get to a question you feel uncomfortable answering, please let us know. Responding to questions is voluntary and you are free to end the interview at any time. This conversation, and the use of it for our research, will be confidential, so we appreciate your openness and honesty. Do you have any questions about the informed consent form or this interview process?

We are going to begin by asking you some questions about beginning your program at a regional campus.

1. What were your reasons for choosing to begin your engineering program at a regional campus?
    a. Probe: How did you feel about starting your undergraduate engineering experience at a regional campus?
    b. Probe: What were your perceptions or assumptions about regional campuses?
    c. Probe: How did those compare or differ to the perceptions or assumptions you had about the Storrs campus?
    d. Probe: How do you currently feel about your regional campus?

Great, thank you so much! Next, we have some questions about your academics both at your regional campus and here at the Storrs campus.

2. Can you describe what your classes were like at your regional campus?
3. How would you describe the relationships you had with your professors at your regional campus?
4. How do you find the manageability of your course load at Storrs compared to your regional campus?
    a. Probe: How many classes did you take in a typical semester at your regional campus?
    b. Probe: How many classes do you take at Storrs?
5. How would you compare your experiences in the classroom at your regional campus to the experiences in the classroom on the Storrs campus?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your professors on the Storrs campus?

We also have some questions about where and how you spend your time at your different campuses.

7. At your regional campus, were you involved in any extracurricular activities?
    i. Probe: If so, what were they?
    ii. Probe: If not, was there a reason?
8. Are you currently involved in extracurricular activities?
    i. Probe: If so, what are they?
    ii. Probe: If not, is there a reason?
9. On the regional campus you attended, where did you find yourself spending the majority of your time?
    i. Probe: What made that location special?
    ii. Probe: Why did you spend your time here?
    iii. Probe: Describe what that location/building/etc. was primarily used for (ex: Gentry Hall, primarily for education classes; Student Union, dining options, cultural centers, student involvement offices, etc.)
    iv. What did this look like during virtual learning?
10. When you had a group project or wanted to meet up with friends, where would you go?
    i. Probe: What was the importance of that location?
11. Where do you spend the majority of your time while at Storrs?
    a. Why do you spend your time here?
    b. Probe: What made that location special?
    c. Probe: Describe what that location/building/etc. was primarily used for (ex: Gentry Hall, primarily for education classes; Student Union, dining options, cultural centers, student involvement offices, etc.)
    d. What did this look like during virtual learning?
12. When you attended a regional campus, where were you living?
    i. Probe: Why did you decide to live there?
    ii. Probe: Can describe more about the people you were living with (if applicable)?
13. While attending the Storrs campus, where are you living?
    i. Probe: Why did you decide to live there?
    ii. Probe: Can describe more about the people you were living with (if applicable)?

Now we would like to ask you questions about your campus change experience and process.

14. First, did you take ENGR 3184: School of Engineering Transition Seminar offered by the School of Engineering?
    a. What are some takeaways you can share with us about the course?
    b. What was your experience like enrolling in ENGR 3184?
        i. Was the experience difficult
        ii. How did you find out about the course?
    c. Do you think the course helped in your campus change process? Why or why not?
    d. Is there any other feedback you'd like to give us about this course?

15. What was the most difficult part of the campus change process?
    a. Probe: What made that particular thing difficult for you?
16. What was the easiest part of the campus change process?
    a. Probe: What helped make that particular thing easy for you?
17. Is there anything else the School of Engineering advising team could have done to make your transition better?
18. Is there anything else you think you could have done to make your campus transition better?
19. If you had a magic wand, what is something you would have changed to improve your transition to Storrs?

At this point, we would like to ask you some questions about your involvement and sense of belonging at your regional campus. As a reminder, if you need to take a pause at any point or do not want to answer a question, please feel free to do so. Okay, so with that,

20. How was your experience making connections with your peers at your regional campus?
21. Can you describe how you felt about your involvement at your regional campus?
    a. What were some of your involvements?

We are now going to pivot to similar questions about your time here on the Storrs campus.

22. What was your experience like when you first arrived at the Storrs campus?
23. Can you describe how you feel about your involvement at the Storrs campus?
    a. What are some of the things you're involved in?
24. Have you found a community of campus change students at UConn?
    a. Probe: Have you found a community with other campus change students in the School of Engineering?
    b. If no: What type of impact (if any) could having this type of community have had on your campus change experience?
25. How was your experience making connections with your peers here at Storrs?
26. Do you feel valued as an individual on the Storrs campus? Why or why not?
27. How would you define a sense of belonging? Do you feel a sense of belonging on this campus? Why or why not?

Our last set of questions are going to be about your academics at both your regional campus and the Storrs campus.

28. Were you ever placed on academic probation at your regional campus?
    If yes:
    a. What feelings came up for you? Are there any distinguishable circumstances that affected this?
    b. Was the academic probation due to campus academic standards or academic standards set by the School of Engineering?

29. Have you ever been on academic probation since starting here at the Storrs campus?
    If Yes:

a. What feelings came up for you? Are there any distinguishable circumstances that affected this?
b. Was the academic probation due to campus academic standards, or academic standards set by the School of Engineering?

These are all of the questions we have for you! Do you have any questions for us or anything to add about your experience that we did not discuss?

Great! Thank you again for taking time out of your day to let us interview you. We know that some of the questions we asked may have brought up different types of feelings for you. We just wanted to remind you that there are a lot of resources on campus–please reference the email that was sent with a list of these readily available resources.